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International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Rapporteur: Mr. Mohammad Wali **Naeemi** (Afghanistan)

I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2010, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-fifth session the item entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" and to allocate it to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Fourth Committee considered the item at its 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th meetings, on 12, 13, 14 and 19 October 2010 (see A/C.4/65/SR.8-11).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.[1]

4. At its 1st meeting, on 30 September, the Committee decided to establish a Working Group of the Whole on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, to be chaired by the delegation of Romania, to prepare proposals to be submitted under the item.

5. At the 8th meeting, on 12 October, three panellists, two representing the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, respectively, and one in his capacity as Second Vice-Chair/Rapporteur of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, delivered presentations on the theme "Space and emergencies" (see A/C.4/65/SR.8).

6. At the 9th meeting on 13 October, the Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space introduced the report of that Committee (see A/C.4/65/SR.9).

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/65/20).

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II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.4/65/L. 2/Rev.1

7. At its 11th meeting, on 19 October, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" (A/C.4/65/L.2/Rev.1), submitted by Romania in its capacity as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

8. At the same meeting, the representative of Romania, in her capacity as representative of the Chair of the Working Group of the Whole, introduced the draft resolution (A/C.4/65/L.2/Rev.1).

9. Also at the same meeting, the Secretary of the Committee read out a statement of the programme budget implications of the draft resolution.

10. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.4/65/L.2/Rev.1 without a vote (see para. 11).

III. Recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

11. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/122 of 13 December 1996, 54/68 of 6 December 1999, 59/2 of 20 October 2004, 61/110 and 61/111 of 14 December 2006, 62/101 of 17 December 2007, 62/217 of 22 December 2007 and 64/86 of 10 December 2009,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and also of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space in order to meet emerging new challenges, especially for developing countries,

Seriously concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, and bearing in mind the importance of article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies[1] (Outer Space Treaty),

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Recognizing also that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and applications as well as in various national and cooperative space projects, which contributes to international cooperation, and the importance of further developing the legal framework to strengthen international cooperation in this field,

Convinced of the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[2]

Seriously concerned about the devastating impact of disasters,[3]

Desirous of enhancing international coordination and cooperation at the global level in disaster management and emergency response through greater access to and

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 610, No. 8843.

[2] See resolution 55/2.

[3] The term "disasters" refers to natural or technological disasters.

use of space-based services for all countries and facilitating capacity-building and institutional strengthening for disaster management, in particular in developing countries,

Deeply convinced that the use of space science and technology and their applications in areas such as telemedicine, tele-education, disaster management, environmental protection and other Earth observation applications contribute to achieving the objectives of the global conferences of the United Nations that address various aspects of economic, social and cultural development, particularly poverty eradication,

Taking note, in that regard, of the fact that the 2005 World Summit recognized the important role that science and technology play in promoting sustainable development,[4]

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its fifty-third session,[5]

1. *Endorses* the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its fifty-third session;[5]

2. *Agrees* that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its fifty-fourth session, should consider the substantive items recommended by the Committee at its fifty-third session,[6] taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries;

3. *Notes* that, at its forty-ninth session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work,[7] as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/86;

4. *Agrees* that the Legal Subcommittee, at its fiftieth session, should consider the substantive items and reconvene the working groups recommended by the Committee,[8] taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries;

5. *Urges* States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space[9] to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties in accordance with their domestic law, as well as incorporating them in their national legislation;

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[4] See resolution 60/1, para. 60.

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/65/20).

[6] Ibid., para. 339.

[7] Ibid., chap. II.D; and A/AC.105/942.

[8] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/65/20), paras. 228-231.

[9] Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 610, No. 8843); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 672, No. 9574); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 961, No. 13810); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1023, No. 15020); and Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1363, No. 23002).

6. *Notes* that, at its forty-seventh session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work,[10] as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/86;

7. *Agrees* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-eighth session, should consider the substantive items and reconvene the working groups recommended by the Committee,[11] taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries;

8. *Notes with appreciation* that some States are already implementing space debris mitigation measures on a voluntary basis, through national mechanisms and consistent with the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee and with the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,[12] endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/217;

9. *Invites* other States to implement, through relevant national mechanisms, the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;[12]

10. *Considers* that it is essential that States pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, calls for the continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, also considers that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and agrees that international cooperation is needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions;

11. *Urges* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

12. *Endorses* the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2011, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications and endorsed by the Committee;[13]

13. *Welcomes* the progress made by the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems towards achieving compatibility and interoperability among global and regional space-based positioning, navigation and timing systems and in the promotion of the use of global navigation satellite systems and their integration into national infrastructure, particularly in developing countries, and notes with satisfaction that the International Committee held its fifth meeting in Turin, Italy, from 18 to 22 October 2010, which was jointly organized by Italy and the European Commission;

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[10] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/65/20), chap. II.C; and A/AC.105/958.

[11] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/65/20), paras. 170 and 171.

[12] Ibid., *Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/62/20), paras. 117 and 118, and annex.

[13] Ibid., *Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/65/20), para. 79; and A/AC.105/969, sects. II and III, and annex III.

14. *Notes with satisfaction* the progress made within the framework of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) in the implementation of the workplan of the UN-SPIDER programme for the biennium 2010-2011,[14] in particular the work of the UN-SPIDER office in Bonn, Germany, which is establishing a systematic compilation of relevant information with respect to disasters and making it accessible to all end-users, as well as the work of the UN-SPIDER staff in Vienna who are coordinating all the programme activities, including the work of the regional support offices, and encourages Member States to provide all necessary support, on a voluntary basis, to UN-SPIDER, including financial support, to enable it to carry out the workplan;

15. *Welcomes with appreciation* the signing of a host country agreement on 17 June 2010 by the Government of China and the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat for the establishment of the UN-SPIDER Beijing office, and welcomes the fact that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/110, regional support offices have been established in several countries to support the implementation of the activities of the UN-SPIDER programme;[15]

16. *Agrees* that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should ensure, within existing resources, the coordination of the UN-SPIDER SpaceAid framework with mechanisms and initiatives that are making space-based information available to support responses to emergency events, thus avoiding duplication of efforts;

17. *Notes with appreciation* that the African regional centres for space science and technology education in the French and English languages, located in Morocco and Nigeria, respectively, as well as the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, affiliated to the United Nations, have continued their education programmes in 2010, and agrees that the regional centres should continue to report to the Committee on their activities;

18. *Emphasizes* that regional and interregional cooperation in the field of space activities is essential to strengthen the peaceful uses of outer space, assist States in the development of their space capabilities and contribute to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration[2] and to that end fosters interregional dialogue on space matters between Member States;

19. *Recognizes*, in this regard, the important role played by conferences and other mechanisms in strengthening regional and international cooperation among States, such as the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development, the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization and the Space Conference of the Americas;

20. *Notes with appreciation* that since the adoption of the Declaration of San Francisco de Quito by the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas in July 2006, more States in the Latin American and Caribbean region have set up national space entities of a civilian nature, thus laying the foundation for enhanced regional

[14] See A/AC.105/937.

[15] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/65/20), para. 113.

cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and recalls that in the Declaration, States in the Latin American and Caribbean region were invited to, inter alia, "set up national space entities to lay the foundation for a regional entity for cooperation";

21. *Welcomes with appreciation* the organization by the Government of Mexico of the Sixth Space Conference of the Americas, to be held in Pachuca, Mexico, from 15 to 19 November 2010, and notes with satisfaction that the proposed results of the Conference will be aimed towards strengthening the participation of the academic, public and private sectors, as well as youth and non-governmental organizations, in regional and international programmes and projects using space science and technology to support the economic, social, cultural and scientific development of the region;

22. *Urges* Member States and invites international organizations to participate actively in the four committees that will meet during the Sixth Space Conference of the Americas;

23. *Emphasizes* the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, including mitigation of the consequences of disasters, in particular in the developing countries;

24. *Notes* that space science and technology and their applications make important contributions to economic, social and cultural development and welfare, as indicated in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",[16] its resolution 59/2 and the Plan of Action of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III);[17]

25. *Notes with satisfaction* that a number of the recommendations set out in the Plan of Action have been implemented and that satisfactory progress is being made in implementing the outstanding recommendations, and that Member States continue to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III through national and regional activities and by supporting and participating in the programmes established in response to those recommendations;

26. *Urges* all Member States to continue to contribute to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications to enhance the capacity of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to provide technical and legal advisory services in accordance with the Plan of Action, while maintaining the priority thematic areas agreed by the Committee;

27. *Reiterates* that the benefits of space technology and its applications should continue to be brought to the attention, in particular, of the major United Nations conferences and summits for economic, social and cultural development and related fields and that the use of space technology should be promoted towards

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[16] See *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

[17] See A/59/174, sect. VI.B.

achieving the objectives of those conferences and summits and for implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

28. *Notes with satisfaction* that the working paper by the Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for the period 2008-2009 entitled "Towards a United Nations space policy" will be considered by the Committee at its fifty-fourth session;[18]

29. *Welcomes* the increased efforts to strengthen further the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, notes with satisfaction that the open informal meetings, held in conjunction with the annual sessions of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, provide a constructive mechanism for an active dialogue between the entities of the United Nations system and Member States, and encourages entities of the United Nations system to participate fully in the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting;

30. *Urges* entities of the United Nations system, particularly those participating in the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, to continue to examine, in cooperation with the Committee, how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration on the development agenda, particularly in the areas relating to, inter alia, food security and increasing opportunities for education;

31. *Agrees* that the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs should continue to participate in the sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development to raise awareness and promote the benefits of space science and technology for sustainable development;

32. *Calls upon* the United Nations University and other institutions of the same nature, within the framework of their mandates, to provide training and to carry out research in the areas of international space law and, in particular, matters relating to disasters and emergencies;

33. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and other relevant regional organizations to offer the assistance necessary so that countries can carry out recommendations of regional conferences;

34. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, and agrees that during its consideration of the matter the Committee could continue to consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conferences of the Americas, the African Leadership Conferences on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development and the role space technology could play in the implementation of recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

35. *Invites* the Committee to consider how it can contribute to the objectives of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012;

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[18] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/65/20), para. 337; and A/AC.105/L.278.

36. *Notes* that, in accordance with the agreement reached by the Committee at its forty-sixth session on the measures relating to the future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[19] on the basis of the measures relating to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[20] the Group of Asian States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of Western European and Other States nominated their candidates for the offices of Chair of the Committee, Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and First Vice-Chair of the Committee, respectively, for the period 2012-2013;[21]

37. *Urges* the Group of African States to nominate its candidate for the office of Chair of the Legal Subcommittee and the Group of Eastern European States to nominate its candidate for the office of Second Vice-Chair/Rapporteur of the Committee, for the period 2012-2013, before the next meeting of those bodies;

38. *Agrees* that, upon the nomination of the candidate of the Group of African States and the candidate of the Group of Eastern European States, the Committee and its subsidiary bodies should elect their officers;

39. *Decides* that Tunisia shall become a member of the Committee;[22]

40. *Endorses* the decision of the Committee to grant permanent observer status to the International Association for the Advancement of Space Safety;[23]

41. *Notes* that each of the regional groups has the responsibility for actively promoting the participation in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies of the member States of the Committee that are also members of the respective regional groups, and agrees that the regional groups should consider this Committee-related matter among their members;

42. *Notes with satisfaction* that a panel discussion on space and emergencies was held at United Nations Headquarters on 12 October 2010, and agrees that a panel discussion should be held at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly on a topic to be selected by the Committee, taking into account the panel discussions held on climate change, food security, global health, and emergencies;

43. *Requests* the entities of the United Nations system, other international organizations and the Secretary-General to continue and, where appropriate, to enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with reports on the issues dealt with in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, and to address the issues covered by the panel discussions held in conjunction with sessions of the General Assembly;

44. *Welcomes* the fact that the Committee will celebrate at its fifty-fourth session the fiftieth anniversary of the Committee and the fiftieth anniversary of human space flight.

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[19] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), annex II, paras. 4-9.

[20] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/52/20), annex I; and ibid., *Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), annex II, appendix III.

[21] Ibid., *Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/65/20), paras. 301-303.

[22] Ibid., *Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/65/20), paras. 305 and 306.

[23] Ibid., para. 308.